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A PROPHECY FULFILLED

ADDRESS BEFORE THE TULALIP INDIAN
SCHOOL, TULALIP, WASHINGTON
21 DECEMBER, 1920

BY
EDMOND S. MEANY

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A PROPHECY FULFILLED

Address Before the Tulalip Indian School, Tulalip,
Washington, 21 December, 1920.

BY EDMOND S. MEANY,
Professor of History, University of Washington.

Three hundred years ago today the Pilgrim Fathers landed at Plymouth Rock. We are assembled to celebrate that event as an epoch in American history.

There is a peculiar significance in the fact that Indians should gather here on the shores of the Pacific Ocean in 1920 to celebrate the landing of white men among other Indians in 1620 on that distant Atlantic shore. A cycle has been completed; a continent has been spanned; and two races of men have learned the meaning of clasped hands as together they turn hopeful eyes toward the future.

In that old time which we are honoring your people knew the bays and shores of this beautiful arm of the sea. Those towering snow-crowned peaks they knew and the rivers running through the deep forests of fir and spruce and cedar. Their canoes were swift in war or chase and they sought omens and guidance from forest, sea and sky.

The white man came with iron and gold, with cloth and flour. The old wild life was quickly changed. The legends of bluejay and beaver gave place to the book and the school.

The book speaks of all time and all people. We still love the legends. They are like voices of the forest. But now we are Americans. We salute our flag and we would honor the Pilgrim Fathers on this anniversary day.

Oh, my Indian friends, I would share your spirit and join this festival of remembrance with a feeling that mingles reverence and hope.

The landing of the Pilgrim Fathers has been described in a poem by Mrs. Felicia Hemans:

“The ocean eagle soared
From his nest by the white wave’s foam,
And the rocking pines in the forest roared,
This was their welcome home.”

Later in the same poem she continues :

“Ay, call it holy ground,
The soil where first they trod ;
They have left unstained what there they found,
Freedom to worship God.”

In that beautiful language we have a picture of the wild landing place and the real reason for their coming. Some who did not like the Church in England at that time sought to purify it and were called Puritans. One group went to Holland and later to America. On account of this journeying they got the name of Pilgrims. These are the ones whom we are honoring today. The party which left Holland in July, 1620, sailed in the *Speedwell* and was to be joined by the *Mayflower* with other Pilgrims at Southampton, England. The two vessels sailed together on August 5, but put back to Dartmouth because the *Speedwell* had begun to leak. Again they started and for the same reason put back into Plymouth. There they decided to leave the *Speedwell* and to reduce the company so that the *Mayflower* could carry the whole number.

Governor Bradford later wrote his History of Plymouth Plantation where, in old fashioned phrases, he tells about reducing the company as follows: “Those that went bak were for the most parte such as were willing so to doe, either out of some discontente, or feare they conceived of the ill success of the vioage, seeing so many croses befall, and the year time so farr spent; but others, in regarde of their owne weaknes, and charge of many yonge children, were thought least usefull and most unfite to bear the brunte of this harde adventure; unto which worke of God, and judgmente of their brethren, they were contented to submit. And thus, like Gedion’s armie, this small number was divided, as if the Lord by this worke of his providence thought these few to many for the great worke he had to doe.”

Early in September, the *Mayflower* sailed on her memorable voyage for Virginia, where other Englishmen had settled at Jamestown thirteen years before, or in 1607. The vessel was carried northward and instead of reaching Virginia they came to a harbor in New England. This harbor they called Plymouth in honor of the English harbor from which they had last sailed. While they were searching

that harbor for a place to land some of the men showed waywardness and so a compact or agreement was drawn upon for all to sign. That early government document is important in American history. It is as follows:

“In ye name of God, Amen. We whose names are underwriten, the loyall subjects of our dread soveraigne Lord, King James, by ye grace of God, of Great Britaine, Franc, & Ireland, king, defender of ye faith, &c, having undertaken, for ye glorie of God, and advancemente of ye Christian faith, and honour of our king & countrie, a voyage to plant ye first colonie in ye northern parts of Virginia, doe by these presents solemnly & mutually in ye presence of God, and one of another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civill body politick, for our better ordering & preservation & furtherance of ye ends aforesaid; and by vertue hereof to enacte, constitute and frame such just & eqall lawes, ordinances, acts, constitutions, & offices, from time to time as shall be thought most meete & convenient for ye generall good of ye Colonie, unto which we promise all due submission and obdience. In witnes whereof we have hereunder subscribed our names at Cap Codd ye 11 of November, in ye year of ye raigne of our soveraigne Lord, King James, of England, France & Ireland ye eighteenth and of Scotland ye fiftie fourth. Ano. Dom. 1620.”

It was winter when they landed. They did not make sufficient preparations and about half of their company perished during those first cold months. Those who survived learned from experience. Others who joined them from England all profited from the hard lessons of that first winter. They were helped by the Indians who were friendly with the newcomers.

From this settlement and others like it grew the colonies and, later, states of New England. From New England came strength for the new nation. Through those colonial times there continued the idea of freedom to worship God and there developed also plans for other forms of freedom, culminating in the struggle for independence and the creation of the United States of America.

Those who accepted responsibilities in the new nation remembered that the Pilgrim Fathers had stood for religious and civil liberty, for good government, and for intellectual improvement through school and college. They

decided that such a legacy should not be destroyed but should be enlarged and transmitted to future generations of Americans.

One hundred years ago, leaders in New England celebrated this same anniversary. The principal speaker was the orator and statesman, Daniel Webster, who made a remarkable prophecy about the celebrations on this day reaching from sea to sea. His words were as follows :

“The hours of this day are rapidly flying, and this occasion will soon be passed. Neither we nor our children can expect to behold its return. They are in the distant regions of futurity, they exist only in the all-creating power of God, who shall stand here a hundred years hence, to trace, through us, their descent from the Pilgrims, and to survey, as we have now surveyed, the progress of their country, during the lapse of a century. We would anticipate their concurrence with us in our sentiments of deep regard for our common ancestors. We would anticipate and partake the pleasure with which they will then recount the steps of New England’s advancement. On the morning of that day, although it will not disturb us in our repose, the voice of acclamation and gratitude commencing on the Rock of Plymouth, shall be transmitted through millions of the sons of the Pilgrims, till it lose itself in the murmurs of the Pacific seas.”

Here are we, on the edge of the Pacific seas, paying respectful tribute to the Pilgrim Fathers. The same glad acclaim has kept company with the hours from dawn at Plymouth Rock to this placid twilight on Puget Sound.

Let us more completely fulfill the Websterian prophecy by recalling some of the progress of the century now closing. From the beginning of civilization it has been a joy for man to hold up for approval the greatest achievement of his time. Ancient man held up the seven wonders of his day as follows :

1. Pyramids of Egypt.
2. Mausoleum.
3. Temple of Diana at Ephesus.
4. Hanging Gardens of Babylon.
5. Colossus at Rhodes.
6. Statue of Jupiter by Phidias.
7. Pharos, a light-house at Alexandria.

In the Middle Ages, before the discovery of America, man again took an inventory of achievement and held up these seven wonders of his day :

1. Coliseum of Rome.
2. Catacombs of Alexandria.
3. Great Wall of China.
4. Stonehenge in England.
5. Leaning Tower of Pisa.
6. Porcelain Tower of Nankin.
7. Mosque of St. Sophia in Constantinople.

In our own day a vote has been taken throughout the world among men and women skilled in science and letters who chose the following as the seven wonders of the modern world :

1. Wireless. ✓
2. Telephone. ✓
3. Aeroplane. ✓
4. Radium. ✓
5. Antiseptics and Antitoxins. ✓
6. Spectrum Analysis. ✓
7. X-Rays. ✓

That is a wonderful showing, so different from the wonders of both the ancient and the medieval man. Not one of those modern achievements was known when Webster made his prophecy one hundred years ago. They have all come in our own century. However, on this day we can declare that all those wonders were begun by the Pilgrim Fathers and by men and women like them everywhere who established schools and colleges to advance the cause of learning.

But the prophecy said that we would survey the progress of our own country during the century. It can be swiftly done for the present purpose. During the same year in which Mr. Webster gave his prophecy the nation reached a crisis in the Missouri Compromise. That seemed to settle a troubled question. In reality it linked the slave power with politics and Thomas Jefferson said it was "like a firebell in the night."

In 1823, disturbances in Europe and the Spanish-American revolutions called from the President of the United States a pronouncement which has since been

known as the Monroe Doctrine. The history of our nation and of other nations has been profoundly affected by that doctrine for the past century.

From 1830 to 1833 that "firebell in the night" kept the nation awake during the conflict over nullification. Was the nation only a compact? Could a state nullify or set aside a law of Congress? The debates decided that the nation was not a compact but really a Union and the great tragedy was thus postponed for nearly thirty years.

In 1844, James K. Polk was elected President. The two successful slogans in the campaign were: "Fifty-four, Forty or Fight!" and "All of Oregon and All of Texas!" The immediate results have exercised enduring influence on the history of the Nation. The dispute with Great Britain over the northern boundary did not bring war nor did it bring the line for which voters had clamored. The compromise treaty of June 15, 1846, fixed the line at the forty-ninth parallel and the Pacific Northwest started on its career of wonderful progress under the Stars and Stripes. The dispute over the boundary of Texas brought war with Mexico. When the treaty of peace was signed on February 2, 1848, the United States secured all of Texas, and all of what now comprises New Mexico, Arizona, California, Nevada, Utah, and parts of Wyoming, Colorado and Kansas.

Later in that same year of 1848, gold was discovered in California and eighty thousand men rushed into the region in one year. They wanted local government. A convention was held at Monterey, a freesoil constitution was adopted and admission to the Union was requested. Once more the combination of the slave-power and politics sounded the "fire-bell in the night." Civil war was again averted by the great compromise of 1850.

The ten years following that compromise were filled with excitement. The Kansas-Nebraska legislation of 1854 destroyed the compromises and opened the territories to slavery. The Lincoln-Douglas debates of 1858 foretold the "irrepressible conflict." The election of Lincoln hastened forward the great tragedy, the four years of Civil War. In a rapid survey such as this, we must not pause over the frightful carnage, the awe-inspiring waste of precious human lives, but rather fix our gaze on the great result,—

stripping the shackles of slavery from the arms of four million black men, women and children. If the children of Pilgrim Fathers taught lessons of civil liberty, here was a result big enough to fill a century.

The years of reconstruction saw many valorous men grappling with economic problems. Homesteaders were encouraged to settle the opening West. Railroads were subsidized with lavish grants that they might be rushed over plains and mountains to the western sea. In the midst of such progress, Alaska was purchased from Russia in 1867. That huge province is only beginning to receive a tithe of its merited appreciation.

When the centennial anniversary of the Declaration of Independence was being celebrated, the exposition in Philadelphia astonished the world with evidences of progress made by the Republic in the hundred years. It may be of interest to mention two toys in that exhibition—the electric lamp and the telephone. Few who were then amused could realize how those two inventions were to influence civilization.

That same year, 1876, saw the last great battle with American Indians, when the tribes of the Sioux Nation destroyed the army under General G. A. Custer. Soon thereafter the cattle men and farmers possessed the plains. The Superintendent of the United States Census in 1890 made the declaration that the frontier had disappeared after 1880.

The real railroad builders knew the interdependence of farm and railroad and the value of both to a growing nation. James J. Hill once declared: "Land without people is a wilderness; people without land is a mob." As the greater opportunities of the frontier had gone, attention was turned toward irrigation to still further reduce the qualities of "the wilderness" and "the mob."

Two events of far-reaching import occurred in 1898. The Spanish-American War freed Cuba and gave the United States overseas possessions which have changed the Republic's perspective with world-wide responsibilities. The other event was the gold rush to Alaska. The rapid gathering of the precious metal in those fields produced results which are still being studied by economists.

In 1900, Secretary of State John Hay lifted American diplomacy into leadership for a time in the Orient by his dealing with the troubled conditions in China.

In 1903, the United States began the construction of the Panama Canal, the completion of which credits America with one of the greatest achievements of the century.

It is not proper for Americans to boast of their part in the Great World War. We served and sacrificed in the great cause. The heroic dead and the lavish dollars may all be counted in course of time, but the full sacrifice of wounds on the field and of death and suffering at home can never be computed. As this century we are now considering draws to a close, earnest men are struggling with the problems of binding up personal and national wounds and the establishment of an international agreement that will prevent such another destructive conflict among the nations of the earth.

We have fulfilled the prophecy spoken one hundred years ago today. What shall we say to those who may assemble here on the next centennial anniversary? We have numerous records of Indians who attain ages greater than a hundred years. So it may be that some of you younger Indians may live that long and bear witness of this meeting to that one. It is not likely, however, that any of us will live to see that day. Those who will assemble then are of the future.

They will love the same great mountain peaks cleaving the sky, the same great rivers running toward the sea, the same wide shores of "Whulge" at ebb and flow of tide.

They will cherish faint echoes of the forests and your fathers' legends of eagle, of beaver and bluejay. They will know that we met here to remember the past and to greet the future.

We lift our voices to you of the future. We ask you to cherish good government, civil and religious freedom, improved education, equality of opportunities for all. We transmit to you all the best legacies of the past. We trust that your century's survey will reveal a progress far greater than our own. We beseech you to send the time-honored American ideals forward to the unnumbered years of our beloved Republic.

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